



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE
JUDGE SENTENCES KC MAN TO MORE THAN 24 YEARS
FOR FIREARM VIOLATION

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a federal judge has sentenced a Kansas City man who was convicted of violating federal firearms law in the continuing Project Ceasefire anti-crime initiative.

Louis D. Tarantola, 45, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced on October 24, 2002, by U.S. District Judge Ortrie Smith to 24 years and 5 months in prison without parole. **Tarantola** was convicted by a federal jury on June 17, 2002, of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Kansas City, Mo., police officers were dispatched to Westport Laundry, 1409 Westport Road, at 1:59 a.m. on October 31, 2001, to investigate a report that a man armed with a gun was threatening to kill his mother and brother. When officers arrived, Graves said, they found **Tarantola** inside the closed business cleaning the floors with a floor buffer machine. He had a Galesi semi-automatic pistol in a holster strapped to his waist.

Possession of any firearm at that time was illegal, Graves explained, due to **Tarantola's** previous violent felonies. **Tarantola** has previous criminal felony convictions for burglary in 1974, robbery in 1975, assault with intent to kill with a pistol in 1975, second degree murder in 1984, bank robbery in 1979 and escape from a federal institution in 1982. Because of the number and severity of those previous convictions, Graves added, Judge Smith granted the government's motion for a sentence that is longer than what is prescribed under the federal sentencing guidelines.

(MORE)

PROJECT CEASEFIRE

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The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Ketchmark. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Kansas City, Mo. Police Department.

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement that targets persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms for federal prosecution. Since the initiative began, Project Ceasefire has resulted in federal charges against 335 defendants, and convictions against 289 of those defendants, including 269 who pleaded guilty and 20 who were convicted at trial. A total of 252 of the 289 convicted defendants have been sentenced, and 37 currently await sentencing hearings.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow